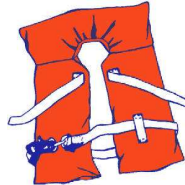


Smart and Safe Wilderness Travel

Wilderness travel offers great personal freedom, but also requires self-reliance and good judgment. By using common sense and following these important safety tips, you can have a safe BWCAW experience.



LIFEJACKETS

- ▶ Always wear a lifejacket.
- ▶ Minnesota state law requires all watercraft, including canoes, to have one wearable U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) on board and readily accessible for each person in the watercraft.

Mandatory Child Life Jacket Wear Law:

As of May 6, 2005 Minnesota law requires a life jacket to be worn by children less than 10 years old when aboard any watercraft while underway.

For More on Minnesota state law, see:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/index.html



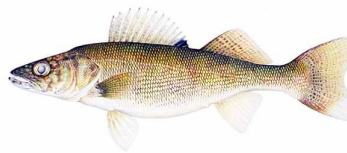
RAPIDS

- ▶ Generally, rapids in the BWCAW are not safe to “run”, so use the provided portages.
- ▶ Powerful currents can trap swimmers under water, or sweep them towards dangerous waterfalls.
- ▶ Fast moving water can push swimmers and boats into rocks and logs.
- ▶ Even with lifejackets on, rapids are dangerous.



WATER QUALITY

- ▶ Giardia lamblia is a parasite that can cause an internal illness that will need medical attention.
- ▶ All drinking water should be treated by one of the following methods:
 - Bring water to a full boil for 3 to 5 minutes ---then let stand until cool enough to drink.
 - Purify with a chemical specifically designed to remove Giardia lamblia.
 - Treat water with a chemical specifically designed to kill Giardia lamblia.



FISH

- ▶ Chemicals such as mercury, PCBs, and dioxin have been found in some fish from certain waters.
- ▶ Eat more pan fish and fewer predator fish as well as trim the skin and fat, to reduce your risk.
- ▶ Check with the Minnesota Department of Public Health for current information on limits of fish consumption at (651)201-4911.



HYPOTHERMIA

- ▶ A low body temperature can be serious, even fatal.
- ▶ Early warning signs are uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, bluish tinge to lips, lack of coordination, and poor concentration.
- ▶ To prevent hypothermia, layer clothing and get adequate food and water.
- ▶ To treat hypothermia, seek shelter from the wind, replace any wet clothing, and share body heat if necessary.

- ▶ Give warm fluids if the person is conscious and have them rest until thoroughly warmed.



FIRST AID/EMERGENCIES

- ▶ Each permitted group should carry a well stocked first aid kit and have group members that know how to provide first aid.
- ▶ Please note that the campsite number is painted on the latrine of most campsites. Also note the location of the lake, campsite, trail, or portage on a map to help emergency people locate any seriously injured party.
- ▶ Document the extent of the injury and a basic physical description of the injured person in need.
- ▶ Send all of this information with visitors able to exit the BWCAW for help.
- ▶ Do not rely on a cell phone. Having a cell phone cannot substitute for knowing how to handle an emergency in the wilderness. Many areas of the BWCAW lack cell phone coverage.
- ▶ In the event of serious injury or illness, the standard SOS call is a series of three signals of any kind, either audible or visible.
- ▶ For summoning help from an aircraft in an emergency, signal them by paddling in small circles or waving a brightly colored cloth tied to the canoe paddle.



TRAVEL

- ▶ There are no directional signs in the wilderness.
- ▶ A compass and accurate map are essential.
- ▶ Most visitors prefer using Fisher or McKenzie maps which can be purchased at some Forest Service offices, area businesses and outfitters, or directly from the map companies.

- ▶ If you get lost, don't panic. Sit down, relax, and think. Chances are that you will figure out your location in a few minutes.
- ▶ If you plan to use a Global Positioning System (GPS) for navigating, be sure you also bring a map and compass as a back up in case your GPS unit fails.



WEATHER

- ▶ Canoe close to shore. It lessens the chance of being endangered by sudden changes of weather. If a storm threatens, get off the water.
- ▶ Dress in layers and be prepared for every kind of weather situation.
- ▶ If in a lightning storm on the water, get to shore. If on land among trees of similar height, put yourself an equivalent distance between two trees. Avoid the tallest trees.
- ▶ Avoid being a bridge between an object and the ground. For example, do not lean against tent poles or trees.
- ▶ Avoid potential paths of conduction such as lichen-covered rocks, cracks and crevices (wet or dry), and areas subject to the "spark gap" such as overhangs, wet ropes, and tree roots.
- ▶ If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, stand on a lifejacket or sleeping bag and squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet.
- ▶ Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible, and minimize your contact with the ground.



DEHYDRATION

- ▶ The body becomes dehydrated when more fluids are lost than replaced.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water.

- ▶ Signs of dehydration include headache, cold and flu symptoms, and infrequent urination.



CAMPING WITH BEARS

- ▶ Keep a clean campsite. Never eat or store food in your tent.
- ▶ Take all precautions to discourage bears from visiting your site, including hanging your food pack, as well as garbage and anything that has a strong or sweet odor (soap, toothpaste, etc.).
- ▶ Some bears overcome their fear of humans and approach campsites looking for food. This includes island sites since bears are good swimmers.
- ▶ If you do encounter a bear, most will be scared off if you make noise (shout, bang pots, or throw fist-sized rocks at the bear, etc.).
- ▶ A very persistent bear may be discouraged by spraying pepper spray into its eyes.



WINTER TRAVEL

- ▶ Be prepared for extreme cold, windy, and wet conditions. Dress in layers to meet all conditions of weather.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water and eat often.
- ▶ Avoid open water and thin ice, stay away from ice less than four inches thick.
- ▶ Watch for hypothermia.